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THE TRYSTING OAK.

BY HENRY C. WATSON.

By yonder brawling stream
There stands a gaunt old tree,
Whose gnarled branches, spreading wide,
A rare shade used to be.
I've couched beneath its giant limbs,
When no one else was nigh,
And heard strange voices speak to me
In the winds, that passed me by.

We sat beneath its shade—
My playmate and my love,
A being fair as any dream
That poet ever wove!
And we were guileless too,
Nor knew of guilt or harm;
Her sweet face rested on my breast,
Her form upon my arm.

The old tree loved us well,
And nodded when we came,
Here was our only trysting place,
And ever 'twas the same.
And here we parted too—
Ah! bitter was each sigh!
Again strange voices spoke to me
In the winds that passed me by.

Now many years have passed;
Again I seek its shade,
And think of all that time has done,
And all the wrecks it made.
My playmate and my love,
That golden heart of truth,
She perished in her summer hours,
In all her bloom of youth.

The day before she died,
She sought its shade to weep;
I know strange voices spoke to her
As dreams pass by in sleep!
She answered them in thought,
And whispered them my name—
*They swept by me in my distant home,
And whispered me the same!*

I felt the unuttered word
Sweep by me, and a chill
Crept over every living nerve
'Till my very heart stood still!
I did not weep nor sigh,
But oh! the wild unrest!
A spirit that would not be calmed
Lay trembling at my breast.

I knew that I must go
And seek that gaunt old tree,
For there the spirit of my dead love
Would come and speak to me.
I waited not an hour—
How wild the speed I made!
I paused nor halted till I stood
Beneath the tree's deep shade.

And here I stood last night
And questioned thus the tree—
"Old friend, where is my gold-haired love?
What news hast thou for me?
Has she, God's beautiful, gone out
As falling stars expire?
Must my heart smoulder in the flame
Of my love's funeral pyre?"

"Where was thy watch and ward?
I left her all to thee!
Fa'se friend, I curse thee in thy age—
Faithless to her and me!
Widowed in heart and old;
Aged in a single day;
Worn out and spirit-tired, like one
Whose hopes have passed away,

"I stand, and claim thy charge—
The maid who should be mine—
Give back the wife of my true heart,
That holy trust of thine!"
I paused—but silence seemed
Of darkness deep a part—
I saw no sign, I heard no sound,
But the beating of my heart!

Where her dear feet had pressed
I knelt me down in prayer,
And heard the rustling of the wings
Of unseen angels there.
Then through the branches hoar
A swift and low wind came,
And ghostly voices sweeping by,
Whispered her blessed name.

And then I fell asleep—
A sleep like trance of death—
When suddenly the darkness fled
Before a flaming wreath;
A sweet face bended over me,
A soft breath stirred my hair,
And quiet fell upon my soul,
As though God's peace were there.

A soft and sweet low voice,
In silvery murmurous stream,
Poured forth the healing words of love,
That were not all a dream.
I felt the kiss upon my brow,
Then in the paling light,
The presence of my spirit love
Grew dim upon my sight.

ART MATTERS.

Constant Mayer's two pictures, "Love's Melancholy" and "Poetical Thoughts," now on exhibition at Schaus' Gallery, are attracting considerable attention. The first was exhibited last year at the National Academy, and received great praise from critics and the public at large, "Poetical Thoughts," however, is the last work of Mr. Mayer's prolific brush, and has never before been seen in public. The title is somewhat of a misnomer, "Love's Ecstasy" would have been better, especially as the picture is painted as a

companion to "Love's Melancholy." But, setting aside the title, the picture is a thoroughly good one, painted with great delicacy and purity of feeling, and moreover, uncommonly good in composition and color. Upon a balcony, overlooking the sea, a beautiful girl is standing, her eyes are upturned, and with uplifted hand she appears to be listening to the moan of the sea and gathering therefrom "Poetical Thoughts."

"With even step and musing gait,
And looks commencing with the skies,
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes,
There held the holy passion still."

Thus sings the poet, and Mr. Mayer has caught the idea fully, giving us a picture full of beauty and grace, teeming with poetry, and, from a technical point of view, so entirely good that the voice of criticism is hushed and one is forced to accord to it almost unbounded praise. The combination of color is particularly striking and original.

Fabronius has executed a chromo of Mr. Mayer's "Love's Melancholy," that is the most perfect specimen of this particular branch of art ever accomplished in this country. It is almost next to impossible to distinguish it from an oil painting.

There is a really remarkable picture by Carnecilius now on exhibition at Schaus' Gallery, entitled "Consolation in Solitude." Bad in composition and worse in painting in many parts, there is a still a peculiar fascination about it that brings you back again and again, to revel in its wonderful mystery and power. Two monks are seated in a balcony, one young, one old, the elder is playing upon a violoncello, beyond is a lake and further still a range of mountains, in the middle of the foreground a clump of trees and foliage rises, the monks are on the extreme right hand corner, the whole effect of the landscape is stormy and lowering. The composition, it will be seen, is intrinsically bad, but the expression upon the faces of the monks is one of the most wonderful and weirdly fascinating things that I have met with in a long time. It attracts, fascinates, rivets you; you may walk around the gallery, but again and again you return to this picture and stand riveted by the almost basilisk expression of the younger monk.

I do not know, do not pretend to say wherein the fascination lies, but there it is; something you cannot get away from—it is repulsive, yet attractive, fascinating, yet horrifying. This may sound, to use a vulgarism, "hyfalutin;" but there is something about this picture that *must* attract the most casual observer.

Another fine picture at Schaus's, though in a much lesser degree, is a still life by Des Goffes, entitled "Art Treasures," a medley of flowers, statuary, and *bijouterie*, irreproachable, almost wonderful in color, but marred by the disagreeable effect of waxiness which mars all this artist's work. If Des Goffes could but overcome this fault, as a painter of still life he would surpass any painter now living; as it is he can but take a second or third rate position.

Inness's series of allegorical pictures, "The Triumph of the Cross," on exhibition at Snede-